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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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			3623	

DATE MAILED: 12/08/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/704,638

Applicant(s)

DOERR ET AL.

Examiner

Scott L. Jarrett

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 July 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-37 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-37 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. This **Final** Office Action is in response to Applicant's amendment filed July 13, 2006. Applicant's amendment amended claims 1-37. Currently claims 1-37 are pending.

Response to Amendment

2. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action.

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-37 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

It is noted that the applicant did not challenge the officially noticed fact(s) cited in the previous office action(s) therefore those statements as presented are herein after prior art. Specifically it has been established that it was old and well known in the art at the time of the invention:

- to enable users to decide how and/or what information (images, text, etc.) is to be displayed in a system (e.g. change fonts, hide/show information/columns, etc.);
- to utilize Boolean expressions/logic (variables) to "flag" information (variables, results, etc.) in software programs wherein the flags serve to mark/indicate, internally and/or externally, that a condition is true or false;

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- to capture information via a dialog box thereby providing a convenient mechanism for prompting users to enter information into a system (software, program, etc.) wherein once the information is entered and approved (OK button) it is entered (stored, saved, retained, duplicated, etc.) into the system for use at a future point in the process (display, edit, report, etc.);

- to utilize Boolean expressions/logic (flags) to indicate that a desired/required condition is true/false (yes/no, 0/1) wherein the Boolean variables are set, according to the value of the condition (e.g. if (input.EstimatedDuration == "yes") then EstimatedDuration = 1), and then tested in order to evaluate (test, check, verify, validate, confirm, compare, etc.) the Boolean expression (e.g. if (EstimatedDuration) then display.EstimatedDurationCharacter) as part of a control statement within a system/program;

- to compare inputs to an expected value (e.g. switch statements) as part of a control statement in a system/program wherein upon the receipt of an expected input the system executes a set of desired logic/actions (e.g. setting a value of a variable, branching to another program, etc.) or upon the receipt of unrecognized/unexpected values "catching and throwing" those errors utilizing well-known error handling techniques (tools, methods, approaches, etc.);

- to summarize project information utilizing roll-up/summary tasks provides a convenient mechanism for summarizing/displaying, at a higher level, the pertinent details inherited from the child tasks/activities;

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- to receive information in one format and then to display the same information in another format (e.g. a user completes a form wherein the users "answers" a plurality of multiple choice questions (radio buttons, check boxes, etc.) and after completing the survey the system restates the users answers using text representing the answers to the questions provided; and

- to provide drop-down list(s) to collect user information provides a simple and efficient mechanism for collecting user input/data (e.g. reducing amount of typing, reduce typographical errors, restrict users to entering only specific values true/false, on/off, etc.).

Claim Objections

4. Claims 10-12 are objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c) as being in improper form because a multiple dependent claim should refer to other claims in the alternative only--, and/or, --cannot depend from any other multiple dependent claim. See MPEP § 608.01(n). Accordingly, the claims have not been further treated on the merits.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

5. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:
- The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.
6. Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding Claim 1, Claim 1 recites the limitation "**the** field based on" in Claim 1. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. Examiner interpreted the claims to read "**a** field based on" for the purposes of examination.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. Claims 1-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Microsoft Project 98 as evidenced by at least Pyron, Tim, Teach Yourself Microsoft Project 98 in 24 Hours (1998) in view of Palisade's @Risk system/method (product) as evidenced by at least the following supporting references:

- I. Marsh, Thomas, Palisade upgrades @Risk software (1998), herein after reference R1;
 - II. Cummings, Nigel, @Risk delivers richer picture (1999); herein after reference R2; and
 - III. Palisade.com Web Pages (May-June 2000); herein after reference R3
- and further in view of Clark, Douglas, U.S. Patent No. 6,889,196.

Regarding Claims 1 and 3 Microsoft Project (MS Project) teaches a project management system and method comprising:

- a user interface for receiving a project task duration value string having a duration value portion and an indication that the project task duration is estimated, wherein the duration value string is text (e.g. 2w; Hour 4 Turning the Task List into a Schedule – Estimating Task Duration, Pages 1, 3; "The actual date fields display "NA"

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until you take a step that sets an actual date. You can remove the actual date by typing NA in an actual date field.”, Hour 17 - Tracking Work on the Project - Tracking Actual Performance, Page 2);

- a parser for separating the duration value string into the duration value wherein the duration value is converted into a number value of time, inherent in MS Project's ability to accept user input (entered duration) in the form of strings (e.g. 3d, 3 month; Hour 4 Turning the Task List into a Schedule – Estimating Task Duration, Pages 1, 3; Figure 4.2) that the system/method then parses (separates) in order to identify, store and display the individual project task duration parameters entered;

- a storage for storing the separated duration value string (Hour 4 Turning the Task List into a Schedule – Estimating Task Duration, Pages 1, 3);

- a display for showing the duration value string in an estimated project task duration field wherein the estimated project task duration is adjusted when a definite duration value is known (actual, edit project task; Figures 1.15, 14.10).

More generally MS Project teaches a method and system for displaying estimated duration character (string, indicia, icon, symbol, text, etc.) where the duration character is text that indicates that a time period is an estimate

(estimated/actual/scheduled duration fields, estimated/baseline/original duration, etc.;

“The actual date fields display "NA" until you take a step that sets an actual date. You can remove the actual date by typing NA in an actual date field.”, Hour 17 - Tracking Work on the Project - Tracking Actual Performance, Page 2; Bullets 1-5, Page 3; Hour 17 - Tracking Work on the Project –Recording Actual Work, Pages 1-2; Hour 17 -

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Tracking Work on the Project, Pages 1-2; Hour 4 – Turning the Task List Into a Schedule – Estimating Task Duration – Pages 1, 3; “Actual values replace scheduled values and make the scheduled values fixed, as far as Project's calculator is concerned.”, Figure 17.1; Figures 3.8, 14.10, 17.5); and

- first/second of the estimated duration fields (Figures 1.15, 14.10).

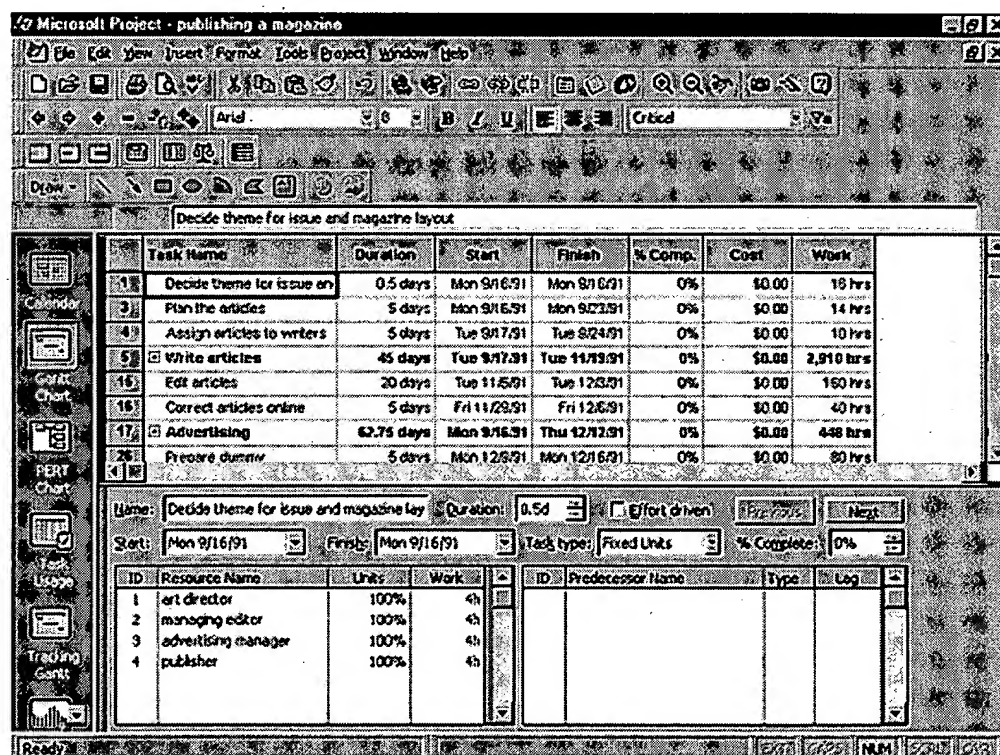


Figure 1: Pyron, Figure 14.10

While the project task duration string (e.g. 2w) is entered as an estimated project duration by default, actual project task durations being entered in a separate field, MS Project does not expressly teach utilizing an estimated flag to indicate wherein the

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estimated flag indicates whether the estimated character should be displayed as claimed.

@Risk teaches that the project/task duration value/string comprises an estimated duration and estimated duration display type (e.g. display/model a normal distribution representing the uncertainty/risk associated with the estimated duration; reference R3: Page 2; Last Three Paragraphs, Page 4; "Construction[Duration] = RiskNormal(Design[Duration],5)", Paragraph 4, Page 6; wherein "RiskNormal" indicates not only that the duration is estimated but also the type of estimate/approximation distribution to be modeled and displayed; reference R3: Page 2) in an analogous art of project management for the purposes of enabling users to replace uncertain project/task duration values with a uncertain/estimated duration functions thereby enabling users to represent a range of estimated durations and model the impact those estimated durations have on the overall project's schedule (reference R3: Paragraphs 1-2, Page 1; Figures 1, 3, 5).

More generally @Risk, commercially available since at least September 1998 (reference R1: Page 1), teaches a project planning system and method for specifying durations comprising (reference R3: Page 1, Paragraph 1; Figures 1, 3, 5):

- receiving from a user a duration of a project task and an indication that the duration is estimated (uncertain, risky, variable, planned, forecasted, predicted, tentative, possible, etc.; reference R1: Paragraph 5, Page 1; reference R2: Paragraphs 3-4, Page 1; Paragraphs 4-5, 8, Page 2; Paragraphs 5-6, Page 3; reference R3:

Paragraph 8, Page 2; Last Three Paragraphs, Page 4;

“Construction[Duration]=RiskNormal(Design[Duration],5)”, Paragraph 4, Page 6);

- storing an indication of the duration of the project tasks is estimated (reference R3: Paragraph 1, Page 1; Risk Toolbar, Save, Figure 1);

- displaying an indication that the duration is estimated (probability of duration, range of task/project durations – inherently indicating the uncertain/estimated nature of the task/project duration; reference R3: Figures 1, 3, 5);

- utilizing flags (if/then conditions) to determine estimated project tasks durations (reference R1: Paragraph 4, Page 1); and

- integrates with Microsoft Project 98 (reference R1: Paragraph 1, Page 1; reference R2: Paragraphs 2-3, Page 1).

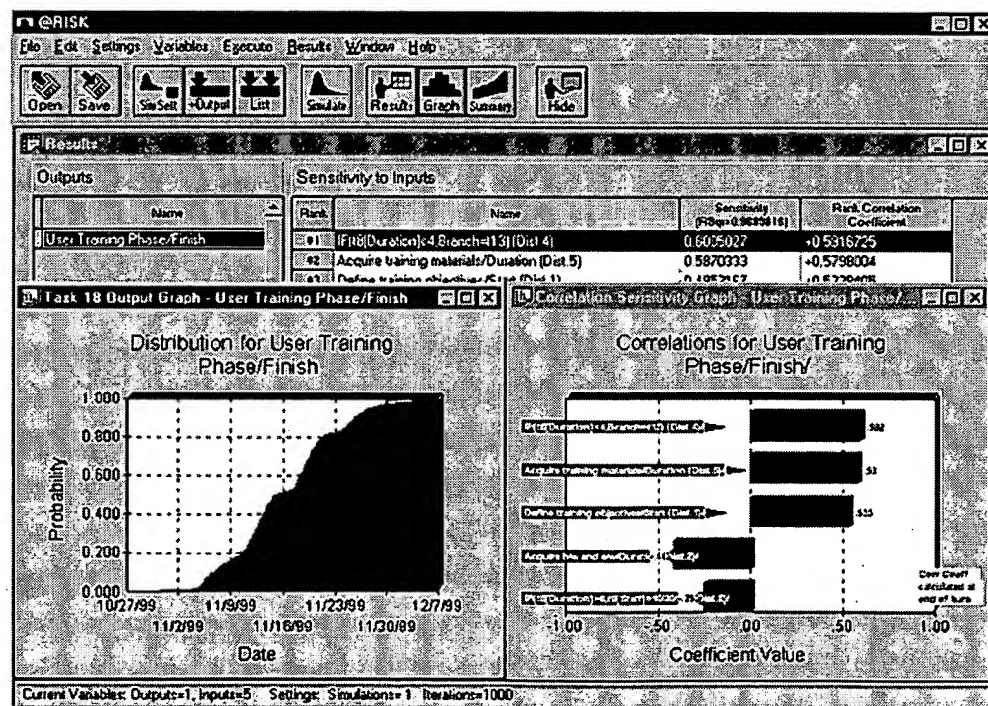


Figure 2: reference R3: Figure 1, Page 1

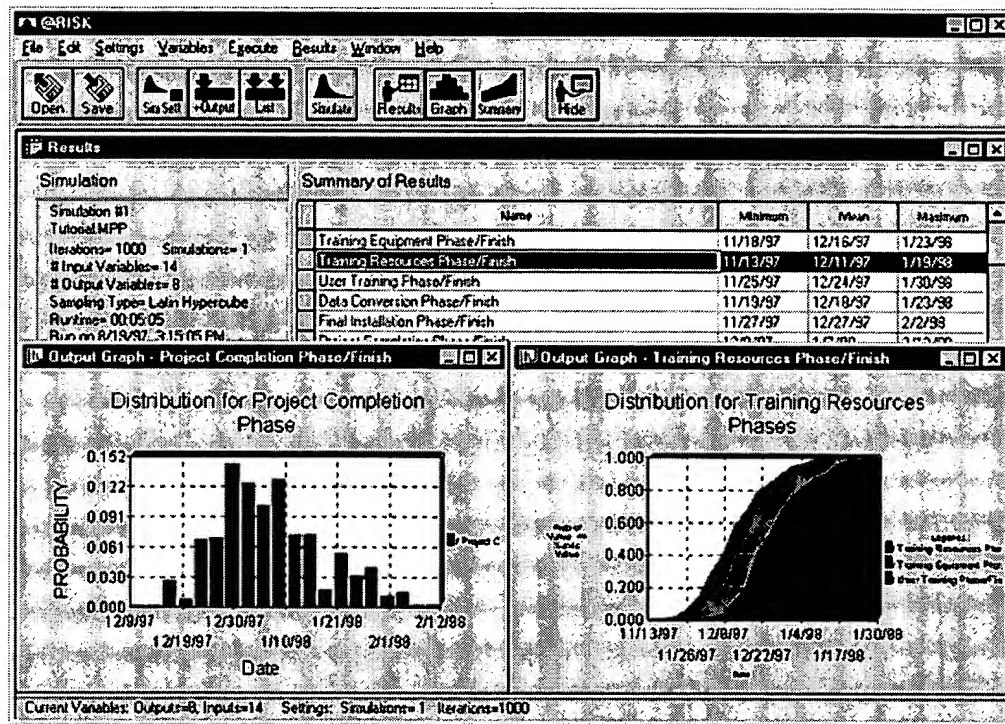


Figure 3: reference R3: Figure 3, Page 3

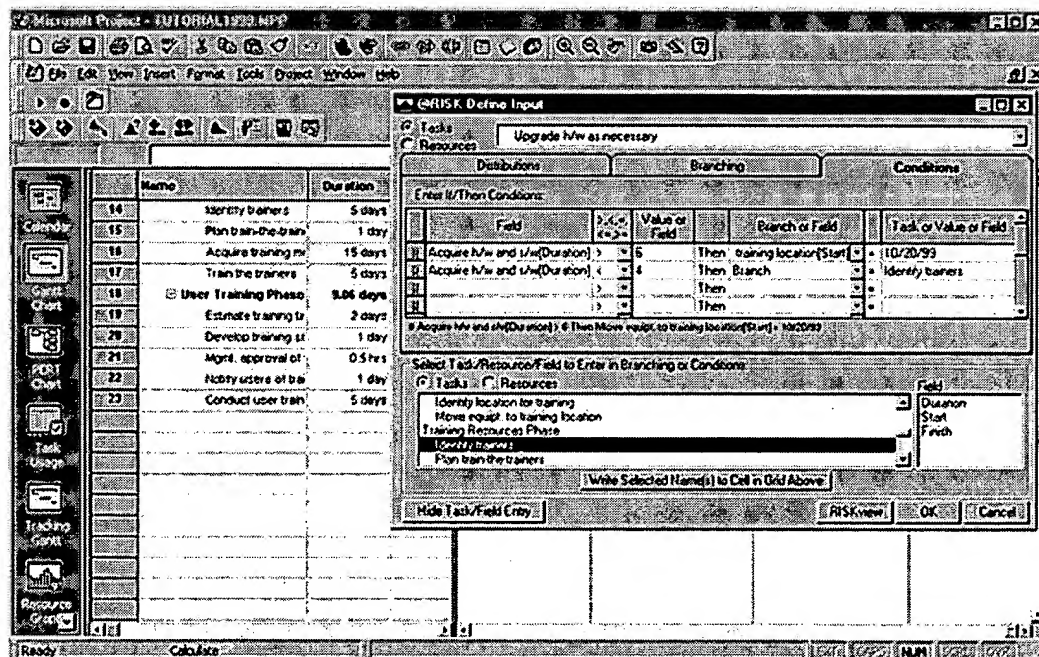


Figure 4: reference R3: Figure 5, Page 5

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the project management system and method as taught by MS Project would have benefited from utilizing an estimated duration string comprising the estimated duration and display type in view of the teachings of @Risk; the resultant system/method enabling users to replace uncertain project/task duration values with a uncertain/estimated duration functions thereby enabling users to represent a range of estimated durations and model the impact those estimated durations have on the overall project's schedule (@Risk; reference R2: Paragraph 2, Page 1; Paragraphs 4-5, Page 2; reference R3: Paragraphs 1-2, Page 1).

While MS Project teaches utilizing flags (Booleans, checkboxes, etc.) to show/hide various information (tasks, summary tasks, etc.; Figure 3.5), neither MS Project nor @Risk expressly teach that the project duration value/string comprises an estimated flag as claimed.

Official notice is taken that enabling users to decide how and/or what information (images, text, etc.) is to be displayed in a system is old and well known. For example users commonly change fonts, hide/show information (columns, rows, etc.) in a plurality of desktop applications (e.g. Microsoft Project, Excel, etc.).

Further official notice is taken that utilizing Boolean logic (variables, expressions, etc.) to "flag" information (variables, results, etc.) in software programs wherein the flags

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serve to mark/indicate, internally and/or externally, that a condition is true or false is old and very well known, more specifically it is old and well known that Boolean variables have only two values true (yes, 1, etc.) or false (no, 0, etc.).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the project management system and method with its ability to receive and display estimated project task durations as taught by the combination of MS Project and @Risk would have benefited from utilizing a plurality of well known system (program, software, etc.) techniques/methods including but not limited to utilizing a flag (Boolean, variable, status, state, mark, etc.) to indicate that the estimated duration character (symbol, mark, indication, icon, etc.) should be displayed and/or not displayed (show/hide, on/off, etc.; e.g. if the inputted estimated/tentative duration display flag is true setting the flag to yes) in view of the teachings of official notice; the resultant system enabling users to control what is displayed in the project management system.

While adjusting estimated project task durations is common (e.g. to accommodate revisions/new understandings of the effort/time required to complete one or more project tasks) neither MS Project nor @Risk expressly teach indicating that an estimated project duration needs to be adjusted when a definite duration value is known as claimed.

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Clark teaches a computer-implemented system for displaying an estimated duration character (indicia, visual indicator, symbol, etc.; i.e. illustrating the uncertainty/risk associated with project costs, durations, or the like via any of a plurality of visual indicia, colors, graphs, symbols, etc.; Column 14, Lines 17-25; Figure 11), where the estimated duration indicia indicates that a time period is estimated and needs to be adjusted (updated, approved, etc.; Column 9, Lines 4-68; Column 12, Lines 10-68; Figures 6, 11) in an analogous art of project management for the purposes of displaying the amount of churn related to the project task/activity and/or the users ability to predict the project task duration (Column 9, Lines 60-68; Column 13, Lines 19-64).

More generally Clark teaches a project management system and method wherein project tasks/activities have estimated/uncertain durations, risks factors as well as measures on the predictive ability of the person/entity making the estimate which are utilized to asses their impact on the project's overall schedule risk (Column 3, Lines 5-37; Column 4, Lines 9-14; Column 10, Lines 42-63; Column 12, Lines 10-68; Column 14; Figures 2-3 and 10-11) comprising:

- a user interface (Figure 2, Element 7; Figure 4, Elements 12, 14) for receiving a duration value, where the duration value string is text that indicates the time period duration and whether the time period is estimated (Column 6, Lines 39-63; Column 10, Lines 42-63; Column 12, Lines 10-68; Figure 5, Elements 24, 26; Figure 8; Figure 10, Elements 120, 130, 132, 136, 138, 140);
- a storage for storing the value string (database; Figures 2-3);

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- a display for interpreting (displaying, forming, presenting, etc.) the duration value string and for showing the estimated duration character in a field (area, region, graph, etc.; Column 13, Lines 19-64; Column 14, Lines 17-68; Column 15, Lines 43-57; Figure 11).

- a duration value, which is the value internally used by the system (estimated length, start, stop time, etc.; Column 10, Lines 42-63; Column 12, Lines 10-15 and 46-62); and

- a project/task duration value/string comprising an estimated duration and estimated duration display type (e.g. display/model a normal distribution representing the uncertainty/risk associated with the estimated duration; Page 2; Last Three Paragraphs, Page 4; "Construction[Duration]=RiskNormal(Design[Duration],5)", Paragraph 4, Page 6; wherein "RiskNormal" indicates not only that the duration is estimated but also the type of estimate/approximation distribution to be modeled and displayed; Page 2).

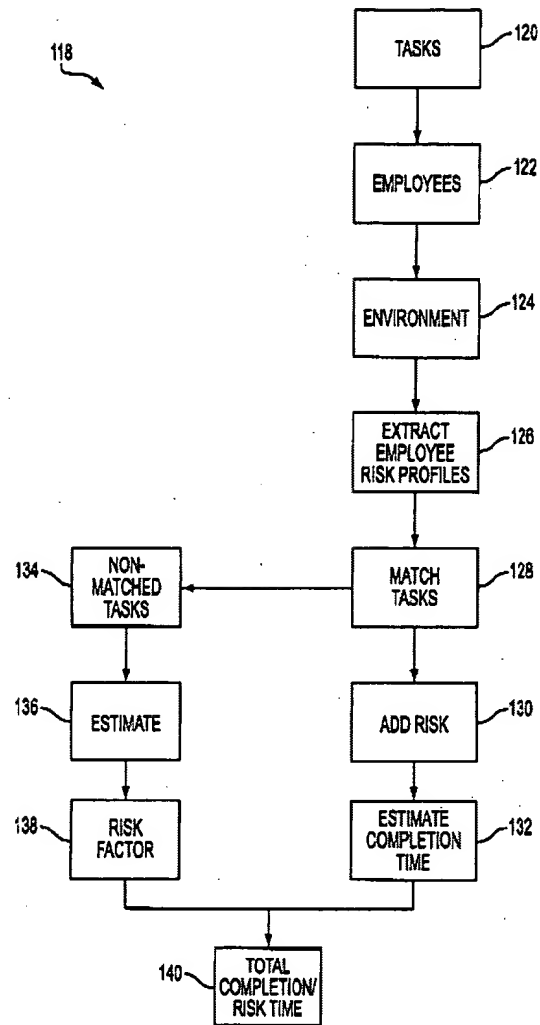


FIG. 10

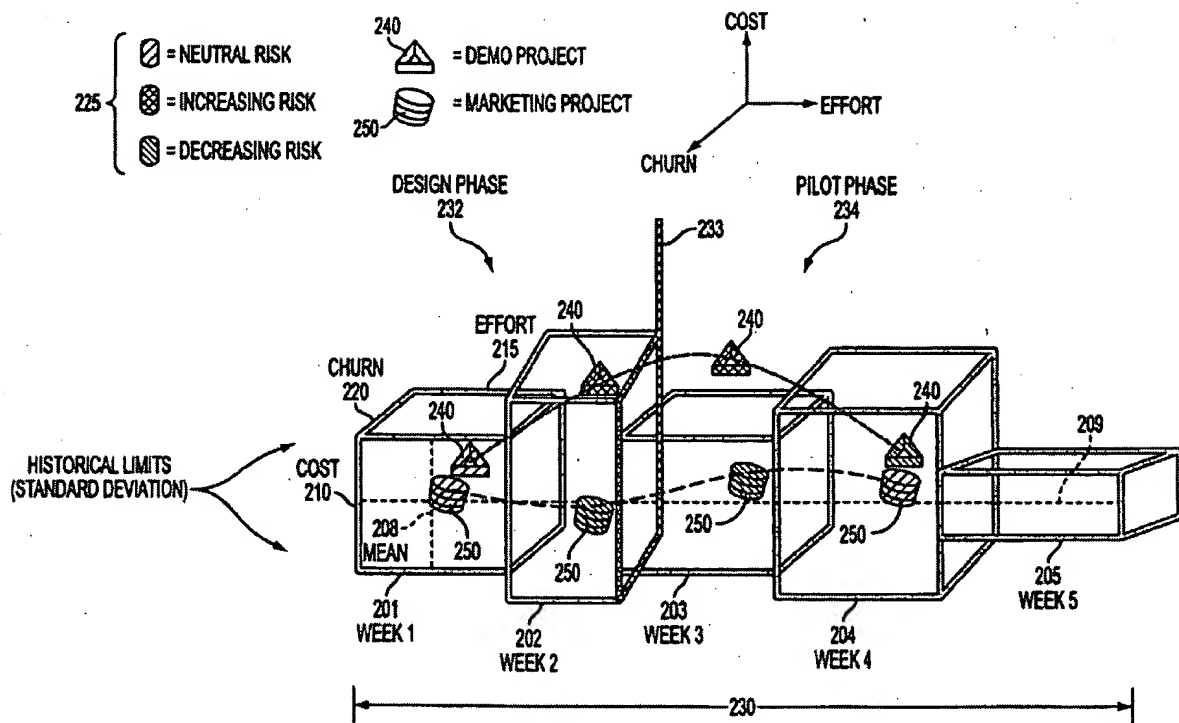


FIG. 11

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the project management system and method as taught by MS Project and @Risk would have benefited from indicating the an estimated project duration needs to be adjusted when a definite duration value is known in view of the teachings of Clark; the resultant system/method enabling users to graphically display the amount of churn related to the project task/activity (i.e. task/project risk) as well as provide an indication of a user's ability to predict the project task duration (Clark: Column 9, Lines 60-68; Column 13, Lines 19-64).

Regarding Claim 2 MS Project teaches a project management system and method wherein the project task duration string comprises a duration value, internally used by the system (e.g. critical path analysis; Hour 4 Turning the Task List into a Schedule – Estimating Task Duration, Pages 1, 3; Figure 4.2).

MS Project does not expressly teach that the project task duration includes a display type as claimed.

@Risk teaches that the project/task duration value/string comprises an estimated duration and estimated duration display type, as discussed above (reference R3: Page 2; Last Three Paragraphs, Page 4; Paragraph 4, Page 6) in an analogous art of project management for the purposes of enabling users to replace uncertain project/task duration values with a uncertain/estimated duration functions thereby enabling users to represent a range of estimated durations and model the impact those estimated durations have on the overall project's schedule (reference R3: Paragraphs 1-2, Page 1; Figures 1, 3, 5).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the project management system and method as taught by MS Project would have benefited from including a project task duration display type in view of the teachings of @Risk; the resultant system/method enabling enabling users to replace uncertain project/task duration values with a uncertain/estimated duration functions thereby

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enabling users to represent a range of estimated durations and model the impact those estimated durations have on the overall project's schedule (@Risk - reference R3: Paragraphs 1-2, Page 1; Figures 1, 3, 5).

Regarding Claim 4 MS Project teaches a project management system and method comprising:

- determining if sheet mode or dialog mode is used (user selects to enter project data via sheet mode, Figure 17.5 or via a dialog window/box/mode, Figure 14.6);
- when the sheet mode is used the user enters a project task duration value, a numerical time value, in a first duration field (Figures 17.5, 14.10);
- when the dialog mode is used the users enters project task duration value in a second duration field of a dialog box and *either* enters the estimated duration character *or* checks an estimated filed (Figures 17.6, 14.10);
- displaying, in either sheet or dialog mode, the estimated duration wherein the estimated duration is adjusted when a definite and/or update duration is known (Hour 17 - Tracking Work on the Project - Tracking Actual Performance, Page 2; Bullets 1-5, Page 3; Hour 17 - Tracking Work on the Project –Recording Actual Work, Pages 1-2; Hour 17 - Tracking Work on the Project, Pages 1-2; Hour 4 – Turning the Task List Into a Schedule – Estimating Task Duration – Pages 1, 3; Figures 17.1, 3.8, 14.10,17.5)

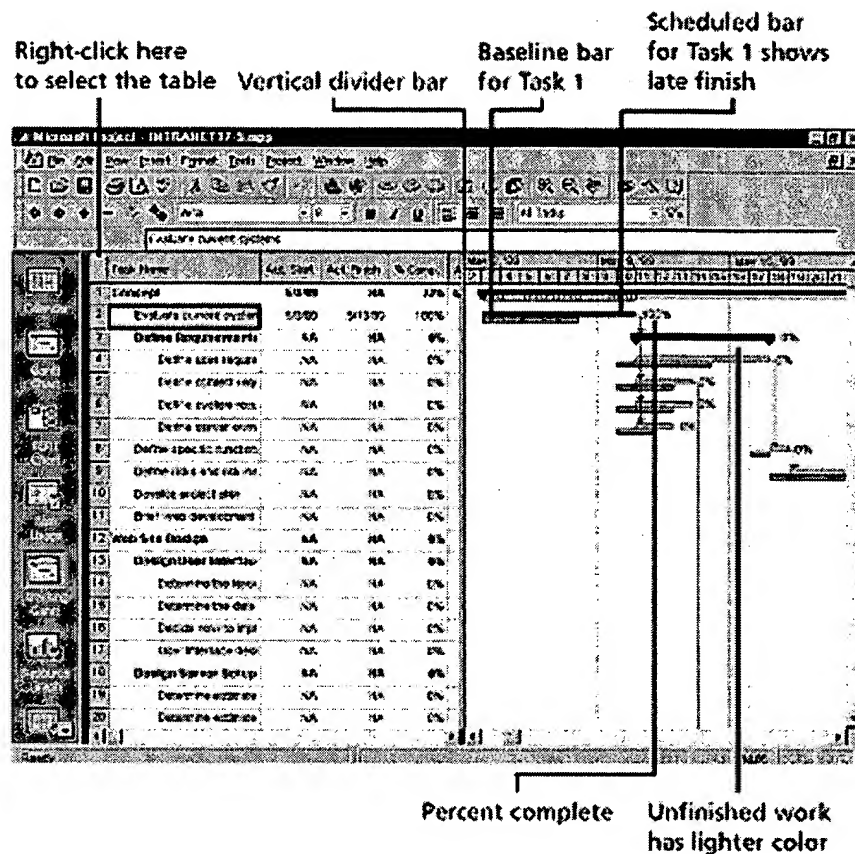


Figure 5: Pyron, Figure 17.5

MS Project does not expressly teach displaying an estimated duration character indicating that the project task duration value is estimated and needs to be adjusted when a definite duration is known as claimed.

Clark teaches a computer-implemented system for displaying an estimated duration character (indicia, visual indicator, symbol, etc.; i.e. illustrating the uncertainty/risk associated with project costs, durations, etc. via any of a plurality of visual indicia, colors, graphs, symbols, etc.; Column 14, Lines 17-25; Figure 11), where

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the estimated duration indicia indicates that a time period is estimated and needs to be adjusted (updated, approved, etc.; Column 9, Lines 4-68; Column 12, Lines 10-68; Figures 6, 11) in an analogous art of project management for the purposes of displaying the amount of churn related to the project task/activity and/or the users ability to predict the project task duration (Column 9, Lines 60-68; Column 13, Lines 19-64).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the project management system and method as taught by MS Project and @Risk would have benefited from indicating that an estimated project duration needs to be adjusted when a definite duration value is known in view of the teachings of Clark; the resultant system/method enabling users to graphically display the amount of churn related to the project task/activity (i.e. task/project risk) as well as provide an indication of a user's ability to predict the project task duration (Clark: Column 9, Lines 60-68; Column 13, Lines 19-64).

Regarding Claims 5-6 MS Project teaches a project management system and method for displaying estimated as well as actual project task durations further comprising at least sheet and dialog modes that enable users to enter, view, analyze and report on a plurality of project information including but not limited to estimated and definite project task durations (Figure 14.10) wherein users utilize well known graphical user interface/human computer interaction metaphors/actions (mouse clicks, cursors, etc.) to navigate amongst the plurality of screens, windows and dialog boxes (Hour 1.

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Getting Started with Microsoft Project 98 - Exploring the Microsoft Project Window, Pages 1-3; Hour 1. Getting Started with Microsoft Project 98 – Understanding Views, Pages 1-4; Figures 1.10-1.15, 14.10).

Regarding Claim 7-8 MS Project teaches a project management system and method wherein sheet/dialog mode further comprises:

- inputting a duration value text string that indicates that the project task duration value (Hour 17 - Tracking Work on the Project - Tracking Actual Performance, Page 2);
- separating and storing the text string into a numerical duration value (task durations are by definition estimates until actual durations are entered; Hour 4 Turning the Task List into a Schedule – Estimating Task Duration, Pages 1, 3); and
- displaying the project task duration value (Figures 1.15, 14.10).

MS Project further teaches the utilization of well known user interface tools (techniques, metaphors, approaches, etc.) to collect and present a plurality of project information including but not limited to capturing user preferences and other project data via dialog windows (i.e. that inherently open and closed based on user input; Figures 3.8-3.9, 4.2) containing text fields, radio buttons (typically representing Boolean values/parameters), checkboxes, flags (Figure 4.2), pull-down menus and the like.

MS Project teaches utilizing flags (Booleans, checkboxes, etc.) to show/hide various information (tasks, summary tasks, etc.; Figure 3.5).

MS Project does not expressly teach separating or storing the project task duration string into a duration display type and an estimated flag, determining if the estimate flag is yes or no (true or false) and storing the estimated flag when the flag is yes/true, or displaying the project task duration value in the correct display type and the estimated duration character, when yes/true as claimed.

@Risk teaches that the project/task duration value/string comprises an estimated duration and estimated duration display type (e.g. display/model a normal distribution representing the uncertainty/risk associated with the estimated duration; Page 2; Last Three Paragraphs, Page 4; "Construction[Duration]=RiskNormal(Design[Duration],5)", Paragraph 4, Page 6; wherein "RiskNormal" indicates not only that the duration is estimated but also the type of estimate/approximation distribution to be modeled and displayed; Page 2) in an analogous art of project management for the purposes of enabling users to replace uncertain project/task duration values with a uncertain/estimated duration functions thereby enabling users to represent a range of estimated durations and model the impact those estimated durations have on the overall project's schedule (Paragraphs 1-2, Page 1; Figures 1, 3, 5).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the project management system and method as taught by MS Project would have benefited from utilizing an estimated duration string further comprising an estimated duration display type in view of the teachings of @Risk; the resultant system/method

enabling users to replace uncertain project/task duration values with a uncertain/estimated duration functions thereby enabling users to represent a range of estimated durations and model the impact those estimated durations have on the overall project's schedule (@Risk - reference R3: Paragraphs 1-2, Page 1).

Neither MS Project nor @Risk expressly teach that the project duration value/string includes an estimated flag as claimed.

Official notice is taken that enabling users to decide how and/or what information (images, text, etc.) is to be displayed in a system is old and well known. For example users commonly change fonts, hide/show information (columns, rows, etc.) in a plurality of desktop applications (e.g. Microsoft Project, Excel, etc.).

Further official notice is taken that utilizing Boolean logic (variables, expressions, etc.) to "flag" information (variables, results, etc.) in software programs wherein the flags serve to mark/indicate, internally and/or externally, that a condition is true or false is old and very well known. More specifically it is old and well known that Boolean variables have only two values true (yes, 1, etc.) or false (no, 0, etc.).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the project management system and method with its ability to receive and display estimated project task durations as taught by the combination of MS Project and @Risk would have benefited from utilizing a plurality of well known system (program, software,

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etc.) techniques/methods including but not limited to utilizing a flag (Boolean, variable, status, state, mark, etc.) to indicate that the estimated duration character (symbol, mark, indication, icon, etc.) should be displayed and/or not displayed (show/hide, on/off, etc.; e.g. if the inputted estimated/tentative duration display flag is true setting the flag to yes) in view of the teachings of official notice; the resultant system enabling users to control what is displayed in the project management system.

Regarding Claim 9 MS Project teaches a project management system and method wherein closing the dialog box (window, screen, mode, etc.) comprises the use of well known user interface metaphors including presenting users with a pop-up/dialog box/window upon the entering of project data that asks if the user wished to save/approve and/or cancel/not save the data (Figures 3.8-3.9, 4.7, 17.2) comprising:

- determining in the users wants to "OK or "cancel" the user choice data;
- duplicating (copying, saving, storing, etc.) the project data value if the user OK's the user choice data; and
- closing the dialog box without duplicating the duration value if the user cancels the user choice data.

MS Project does not expressly teach that the project/task duration string further includes a display type or estimated flag as claimed.

@Risk teaches that the project/task duration value/string comprises an estimated duration and estimated duration display type (e.g. display/model a normal distribution representing the uncertainty/risk associated with the estimated duration; Page 2; Last Three Paragraphs, Page 4) in an analogous art of project management for the purposes of enabling users to replace uncertain project/task duration values with a uncertain/estimated duration functions thereby enabling users to represent a range of estimated durations and model the impact those estimated durations have on the overall project's schedule (Paragraphs 1-2, Page 1).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the project management system and method as taught by MS Project would have benefited from utilizing an estimated duration string comprising the estimated duration and display type in view of the teachings of @Risk; the resultant system/method enabling users to replace uncertain project/task duration values with a uncertain/estimated duration functions thereby enabling users to represent a range of estimated durations and model the impact those estimated durations have on the overall project's schedule (@Risk - reference R3: Paragraphs 1-2, Page 1).

Neither MS Project nor @Risk expressly teach that the project duration value/string comprises an estimated flag as claimed.

Official notice is taken that enabling users to decide how and/or what information (images, text, etc.) is to be displayed in a system is old and well known. For example users commonly change fonts, hide/show information (columns, rows, etc.) in a plurality of desktop applications (e.g. Microsoft Project, Excel, etc.).

Further official notice is taken that utilizing Boolean logic (variables, expressions, etc.) to “flag” information (variables, results, etc.) in software programs wherein the flags serve to mark/indicate, internally and/or externally, that a condition is true or false is old and very well known. More specifically it is old and well known that Boolean variables have only two values true (yes, 1, etc.) or false (no, 0, etc.).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the project management system and method with its ability to receive and display estimated project task durations as taught by the combination of MS Project and @Risk would have benefited from utilizing a plurality of well known system (program, software, etc.) techniques/methods including but not limited to utilizing a flag (Boolean, variable, status, state, mark, etc.) to indicate that the estimated duration character (symbol, mark, indication, icon, etc.) should be displayed and/or not displayed (show/hide, on/off, etc.; e.g. if the inputted estimated/tentative duration display flag is true setting the flag to yes) in view of the teachings of official notice; the resultant system enabling users to control what is displayed in the project management system.

Regarding Claim 13 MS Project teaches the utilization of well known user interface tools (techniques, metaphors, approaches, etc.) to collect and present a plurality of project information including but not limited to capturing user preferences that define how the information is shown/displayed (e.g. show/hide summary level tasks; Hour 3 Starting a New Project and Working with Tasks – Arranging Tasks in an Outline, Pages 1-3; Figure 3.5).

MS Project does not expressly teach enabling users the option of displaying/not displaying the estimated duration character (estimated duration display preference/setting) as claimed.

Official notice is taken that enabling users to decide how and/or what information (images, text, etc.) is to be displayed in a system is old and well known. For example users commonly change fonts, hide/show information (columns, rows, etc.) in a plurality of desktop applications (e.g. Microsoft Project, Excel, etc.).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the project management system and method with its ability to receive and display estimated project task durations as taught by MS Project would have benefited from utilizing a plurality of well known system (program, software, etc.) techniques/methods including but not limited to utilizing a flag (Boolean, variable, status, state, mark, etc.) to indicate that the estimated duration character (symbol, mark, indication, icon, etc.)

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should be displayed and/or not displayed (show/hide, on/off, etc.) in view of the teachings of official notice; the resultant system enabling users to control what is displayed in the project management system.

Regarding Claims 14, 23 and 31 MS Project teaches a project management system and method further comprising enabling the users to set a preference (setting) wherein new tasks durations have estimated duration by default until the user enters duration (Hour 4 – Turning Task List Into A Schedule – Estimating Task Duration, Pages 1, 3; Hour 17 – Tracking Work on The Project – Pages 1-2).

MS Project does not expressly teach that the default duration estimations are associated with estimated duration characters as claimed.

@Risk teaches that the project/task duration value/string comprises an estimated duration and estimated duration display type (e.g. display/model a normal distribution representing the uncertainty/risk associated with the estimated duration; Page 2; Last Three Paragraphs, Page 4) in an analogous art of project management for the purposes of enabling users to replace uncertain project/task duration values with a uncertain/estimated duration functions thereby enabling users to represent a range of estimated durations and model the impact those estimated durations have on the overall project's schedule (Paragraphs 1-2, Page 1).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the project management system and method as taught by MS Project would have benefited from utilizing an estimated duration string comprising the estimated duration and display type in view of the teachings of @Risk; the resultant system/method enabling users to replace uncertain project/task duration values with a uncertain/estimated duration functions thereby enabling users to represent a range of estimated durations and model the impact those estimated durations have on the overall project's schedule (@Risk - reference R3: Paragraphs 1-2, Page 1).

Regarding Claims 15, 22, 30 and 37 MS Project teaches filtering tasks based on any of a plurality of pre-defined and/or user defined fields (Hour 14. Optimizing the Project Plan - Identifying the Critical Path, Page 1; Hour 14. Optimizing the Project Plan - Filtering Tasks or Resources, Page 1; Figures 14.14-14.18), including but not limited to actual duration and duration (estimated by default) project task durations, in an analogous art of project management for the purposes of identifying the project's critical path and/or enabling users to view user-defined/controlled subsets of the project information.

Microsoft Project - Book Project

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Project Window Help

Task Name Duration Start Finish Predecessors Resource Names

Task ID	Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish	Predecessors	Resource Names
1	First Draft Outline	(All)	Tue 1/6/98			Author
2	Sample Chapter	(Custom...)	Tue 1/13/98			Author
3	Outline and Sample Chapter	Today	Fri 1/16/98		1, 2	Developmental Editor
4	25% of Book	Tomorrow	Tue 1/27/98			Author
5	Technical Review 25%	This week	Tue 2/3/98		4	Technical Editor
6	Editorial Review 25%	Next week	Tue 2/10/98		5	Developmental Editor
7	50% of Book	This month	Thu 2/5/98			Author
8	Technical Review 50%	Next month	Fri 2/13/98		7	Technical Editor
9	Editorial Review 50%	Wed 1/27/98	Mon 2/23/98		8	Developmental Editor
10	75% of Book	10 days	Mon 2/16/98	Fri 2/27/98		Author
11	Technical Review 75%	5 days	Mon 3/2/98	Fri 3/6/98	10	Technical Editor
12	Editorial Review 75%	4 days	Mon 3/9/98	Thu 3/12/98	11	Developmental Editor
13	100 % of Book	11 days	Fri 1/2/98	Fri 1/18/98		Author
14	Technical Review 100%	5 days	Fri 1/16/98	Fri 1/23/98	13	Technical Editor
15	Editorial Review 100%	5 days	Fri 1/23/98	Fri 1/30/98	14	Developmental Editor
16	Final Author Review	13.33 days	Fri 1/30/98	Wed 2/18/98	15	Author[75%]

Figure 6: Pyron, Figure 14.4

Filter Definition in 'publishing a magazine'

Name: Critical Task not showing cost ☐ Show in menu

Filter

Cut Row Copy Row Paste Row Insert Row Delete Row

☒ [Actual Cost]

And/Or	Field Name	Test	Value(s)
And	Critical	does not contain	[Actual Cost] [% Complete] [% Work Complete] [Actual Cost] [Actual Duration] [Actual Finish] [Actual Overtime Cost] [Actual Overtime Work] [Actual Start] [Actual Work] [ACWP]

☐ Show related summary rows

Figure 7: Pyron, 14.6

Regarding Claims 16, 21, 29 and 36 MS Project teaches summarizing project information utilizing roll-up/summary tasks wherein parent tasks/summary tasks inherit/contain the properties/attributes contained in the child tasks/activities (Hour 3: Arranging Tasks with an Outline; Page 1 Figures 4.3, 4.5; Hour 17 Tracking Actual Performance, Last Bullet, Page 3, "Project does not show a summary task as finished until the last of its subtasks is finished.") in an analogous art of project management for the purposes of summarizing aspects of the child/sub-tasks (Hour 3: Arranging Tasks with an Outline; Page 1).

Regarding Claim 17 MS Project teaches a project planning system and method comprising:

- receiving a duration value string having a project task duration, a numerical value of time, and an indication that the duration is estimated (estimated/actual/scheduled duration fields, estimated/baseline/original duration, etc.; Hour 17 - Tracking Work on the Project - Tracking Actual Performance, Page 2; Bullets 1-5, Page 3; Hour 17 - Tracking Work on the Project –Recording Actual Work, Pages 1-2; Hour 17 - Tracking Work on the Project, Pages 1-2; Hour 4 – Turning the Task List Into a Schedule – Estimating Task Duration – Pages 1, 3, Figure 17.1; Figures 3.8, 14.10,17.5);
- storing an indication that the project task duration is estimated (Hour 4 Turning the Task List into a Schedule – Estimating Task Duration, Pages 1, 3);

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- a display for showing the duration value string and character in an estimated project duration field based wherein if the estimated project task duration is adjusted when a definite duration value is known (actual, edit project task; Figures 1.15, 14.10); and

- first/second of the estimated duration fields (Figures 1.15, 14.10).

MS Project does not expressly teach displaying an indication that a project task needs to be adjusted when a definite value is known as claimed.

While adjusting estimated project task durations is common (e.g. to accommodate revisions/new understandings of the effort/time required to complete one or more project tasks) neither MS Project nor @Risk expressly teach indicating that an estimated project duration needs to be adjusted when a definite duration value is known as claimed.

Clark teaches a computer-implemented system for displaying an estimated duration character (indicia, visual indicator, symbol, etc.; i.e. illustrating the uncertainty/risk associated with project costs, durations, etc. via any of a plurality of visual indicia, colors, graphs, symbols, etc.; Column 14, Lines 17-25; Figure 11), where the estimated duration indicia indicates that a time period is estimated and needs to be adjusted (updated, approved, etc.; Column 9, Lines 4-68; Column 12, Lines 10-68; Figures 6, 11) in an analogous art of project management for the purposes of displaying

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the amount of churn related to the project task/activity and/or the users ability to predict the project task duration (Column 9, Lines 60-68; Column 13, Lines 19-64).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the project management system and method as taught by MS Project and @Risk would have benefited from indicating the an estimated project duration needs to be adjusted when a definite duration value is known in view of the teachings of Clark; the resultant system/method enabling users to graphically display the amount of churn related to the project task/activity (i.e. task/project risk) as well as provide an indication of a user's ability to predict the project task duration (Clark: Column 9, Lines 60-68; Column 13, Lines 19-64).

Regarding Claim 18 MS Project does not expressly teach a project planning system and method wherein the first/second indications are in different formats.

@Risk teaches a system and method for project management utilizing uncertain/estimated task durations wherein the received indication and the displayed indication are in different formats (e.g. receiving task/project duration as a text/input string and displaying as a graph/chart; Last Paragraph, Page 4; "Construction[Duration]=RiskNormal(Design[Duration],5)", Paragraph 4, Page 6; Figures 1, 3, 5).

Clark teaches a computer-implemented system for displaying an estimated duration character (indicia, visual indicator, symbol, etc.; i.e. illustrating the uncertainty/risk associated with project costs, durations, etc. via any of a plurality of visual indicia, colors, graphs, symbols, etc.; Column 14, Lines 17-25; Figure 11), where the estimated duration indicia indicates that a time period is estimated and needs to be adjusted (updated, approved, etc.; Column 9, Lines 4-68; Column 12, Lines 10-68; Figures 6, 11) in an analogous art of project management for the purposes of displaying the amount of churn related to the project task/activity and/or the users ability to predict the project task duration (Column 9, Lines 60-68; Column 13, Lines 19-64).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the project management system and method as taught by MS Project and @Risk would have benefited from indicating the an estimated project duration utilizing any of a plurality of graphical/visually representations in view of the teachings of Clark; the resultant system/method enabling users to graphically display the amount of churn related to the project task/activity (i.e. task/project risk) as well as provide an indication of a user's ability to predict the project task duration (Clark: Column 9, Lines 60-68; Column 13, Lines 19-64).

Regarding Claims 19, 27 and 34 MS Project teaches a system and method for managing project wherein in estimated durations comprises a string of having duration (3d) or an uncertainty character/symbol (e.g. "NA") as discussed above.

MS Project does not expressly teach that a first estimated duration indication is a symbol of uncertainty specified as part of a duration string.

@Risk teaches a system and method for project management utilizing uncertain/estimated task durations wherein the received indication is a symbol (character, indicia, marking, etc.) of uncertainty is part of a string (input) that includes the duration ("Construction[Duration]=RiskNormal(Design[Duration],5)", Paragraph 4, Page 6; wherein "RiskNormal" indicates not only that the duration is estimated but also the type of estimate/approximation distribution to be modeled and displayed; Page 2).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the project management system and method as taught by MS Project would have benefited from utilizing an estimated duration string comprising the estimated duration and display type in view of the teachings of @Risk; the resultant system/method enabling users to replace uncertain project/task duration values with a uncertain/estimated duration functions thereby enabling users to represent a range of estimated durations and model the impact those estimated durations have on the overall project's schedule (@Risk - reference R3: Paragraphs 1-2, Page 1).

Regarding Claims 20, 28 and 35 MS Project teaches a project management system and method wherein estimated and actual (definite) durations are entered into

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selected respective fields (selection of an estimated, current, baseline, actual fields;

Hour 4 Turning Task List Into a Schedule – Estimating Task Duration, Pages 1, 3; Hour 17 – Tracking Work on the Project, Pages 1-2).

Regarding Claims 24 and 32 MS Project teaches changing an estimated project task duration to a definite/actual task duration and storing the actual task duration for the purposes of enabling users track actual work progress/completed vs. estimated/planned project activities (durations, start/end dates, number of resources, etc.) as well as perform a plurality of analysis including but not limited to earned value (Part VI: Managing and Tracking the Project – Hour 17: Tracking Work on the Project, Pages 1-2; Hour 17: Tracking Work on the Project – Understanding Tracking Fields – Pages 1-2; Figure 17.1, 17.5).

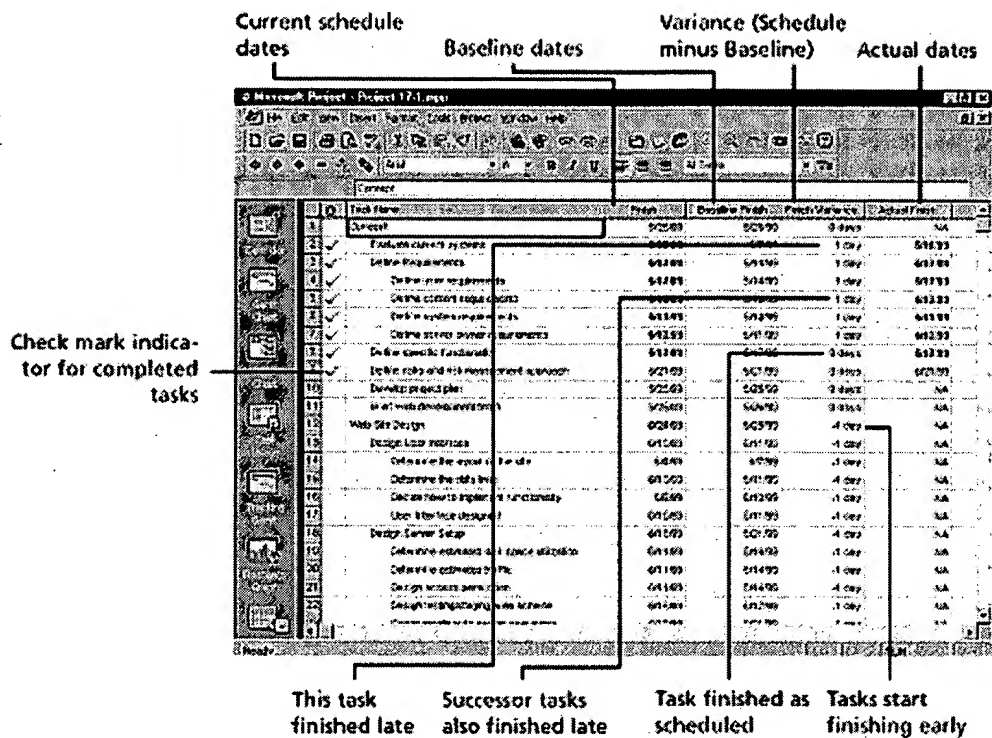


Figure 8: Pyron, Figure 17.1

Regarding Claims 25 and 33 MS Project teaches a project management system and method comprising:

- receiving and storing a project task duration value, a numerical value of time, string, an indication if the duration is estimated or definite (actual; i.e. "descriptions of tasks"; "Project tags the current schedule field as "fixed" now that an actual value is known", Hour 17 - Tracking Work on the Project, Bullet 2, Page 3; Hour 4 – Turning Task List Into A Schedule – Estimating Task Duration, Pages 1, 3); and
- displaying the duration of the project task, displaying an indication that the duration is estimated (Hour 4 – Turning Task List Into A Schedule – Estimating Task

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Duration, Pages 1, 3; Hour 17, Tracking Work on Project – Tracking Actual Performance, Page 2; Bullets 1-5, Page 3).

MS Project does not expressly teach displaying an indication that a project task needs to be adjusted when a definite value is known as claimed.

While adjusting estimated project task durations is common (e.g. to accommodate revisions/new understandings of the effort/time required to complete one or more project tasks) neither MS Project nor @Risk expressly teach indicating that an estimated project duration needs to be adjusted when a definite duration value is known as claimed.

Clark teaches a computer-implemented system for displaying an estimated duration character (indicia, visual indicator, symbol, etc.; i.e. illustrating the uncertainty/risk associated with project costs, durations, etc. via any of a plurality of visual indicia, colors, graphs, symbols, etc.; Column 14, Lines 17-25; Figure 11), where the estimated duration indicia indicates that a time period is estimated and needs to be adjusted (updated, approved, etc.; Column 9, Lines 4-68; Column 12, Lines 10-68; Figures 6, 11) in an analogous art of project management for the purposes of displaying the amount of churn related to the project task/activity and/or the users ability to predict the project task duration (Column 9, Lines 60-68; Column 13, Lines 19-64).

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It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the project management system and method as taught by MS Project and i would have benefited from indicating the an estimated project duration needs to be adjusted when a definite duration value is known in view of the teachings of Clark; the resultant system/method enabling users to graphically display the amount of churn related to the project task/activity (i.e. task/project risk) as well as provide an indication of a user's ability to predict the project task duration (Clark: Column 9, Lines 60-68; Column 13, Lines 19-64).

Regarding Claim 26 MS Project does not expressly teach an estimated duration character that is the same as the indication as claimed.

@Risk teaches utilizing an estimated duration character (symbol, indicia, text, etc.) that is the same and the indication (reference R3: Page 2; Last Three Paragraphs, Page 4; "Construction[Duration] = RiskNormal(Design[Duration],5)", Paragraph 4, Page 6; Page 2) in an analogous art of project management for the purposes of enabling users to replace uncertain project/task duration values with a uncertain/estimated duration functions thereby enabling users to represent a range of estimated durations and model the impact those estimated durations have on the overall project's schedule (reference R3: Paragraphs 1-2, Page 1; Figures 1, 3, 5).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the project management system and method as taught by MS Project would have benefited from utilizing an estimated duration string comprising the estimated duration utilizing the same character as the indication in view of the teachings of @Risk; the resultant system/method enabling users to replace uncertain project/task duration values with a uncertain/estimated duration functions thereby enabling users to represent a range of estimated durations and model the impact those estimated durations have on the overall project's schedule (@Risk - reference R3: Paragraphs 1-2, Page 1).

Regarding Claim 32 MS Project teaches a project management system and method further comprising storing a definite duration of the task upon receiving an indication to change the duration of the task from estimated to definite (actual; i.e. "descriptions of tasks"; "Project tags the current schedule field as "fixed" now that an actual value is known", Hour 17 - Tracking Work on the Project, Bullet 2, Page 3; Hour 4 – Turning Task List Into A Schedule – Estimating Task Duration, Pages 1, 3).

Regarding Claim 33 MS Project teaches a project management system and method comprising:

- providing descriptions of tasks having durations and indications of whether the durations are estimated, wherein the task durations are numerical time values (Hour 4 Turning the Task List into a Schedule – Estimating Task Duration, Pages 1, 3; Hour 17 - Tracking Work on the Project - Tracking Actual Performance, Page 2); and

- displaying the duration of the project task, displaying an indication that the duration is estimated (Hour 4 – Turning Task List Into A Schedule – Estimating Task Duration, Pages 1, 3; Hour 17, Tracking Work on Project – Tracking Actual Performance, Page 2; Bullets 1-5, Page 3).

MS Project does not expressly teach displaying an indication that a project task needs to be adjusted when a definite value is known as claimed.

While adjusting estimated project task durations is common (e.g. to accommodate revisions/new understandings of the effort/time required to complete one or more project tasks) neither MS Project nor @Risk expressly teach indicating that an estimated project duration needs to be adjusted when a definite duration value is known as claimed.

Clark teaches a computer-implemented system for displaying an estimated duration character (indicia, visual indicator, symbol, etc.; i.e. illustrating the uncertainty/risk associated with project costs, durations, etc. via any of a plurality of visual indicia, colors, graphs, symbols, etc.; Column 14, Lines 17-25; Figure 11), where the estimated duration indicia indicates that a time period is estimated and needs to be adjusted (updated, approved, etc.; Column 9, Lines 4-68; Column 12, Lines 10-68; Figures 6, 11) in an analogous art of project management for the purposes of displaying

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the amount of churn related to the project task/activity and/or the users ability to predict the project task duration (Column 9, Lines 60-68; Column 13, Lines 19-64).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the project management system and method as taught by MS Project and Clark would have benefited from indicating the an estimated project duration needs to be adjusted when a definite duration value is known in view of the teachings of Clark; the resultant system/method enabling users to graphically display the amount of churn related to the project task/activity (i.e. task/project risk) as well as provide an indication of a user's ability to predict the project task duration (Clark: Column 9, Lines 60-68; Column 13, Lines 19-64).

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Scott L. Jarrett whose telephone number is (571) 272-7033. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 8:00AM - 5:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hafiz Tariq can be reached on (571) 272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



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12/6/2006



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